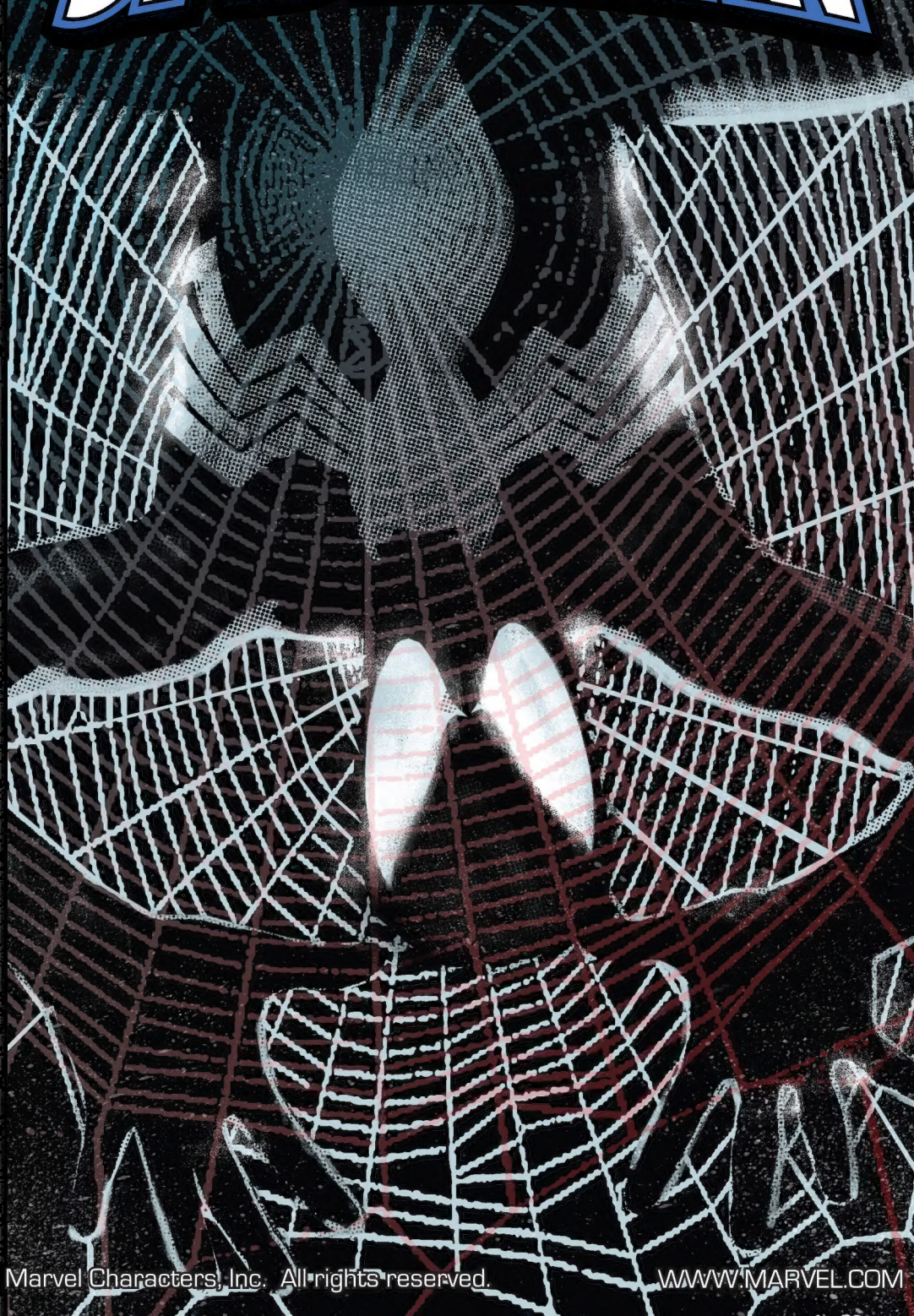


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DAVID • NAUCK • CAMPANELLA

Friendly Neighborhood
SPIDER-MAN®

BACK IN BLACK



BACK IN BLACK

After revealing his identity to the world during the CIVIL WAR, Peter Parker finds himself and his family targets of the world's most dangerous criminals.

With his Aunt May downed by a sniper's bullet and barely hanging onto life, Peter has donned his old black costume as a dark warning to the world that he's no longer the man he used to be.

PREVIOUSLY IN *Friendly Neighborhood* **SPIDER-MAN**

While on a date with Daily Bugle reporter Betty Brant, Flash Thompson was being mysteriously stalked by Midtown High's school nurse, the mysteriously named Miss Arrow.

For months the questions around Miss Arrow have grown: From her contact with Spidey's old villain Mysterio (and a mention of her "superiors") to odd-looking stingers growing straight from her wrist.

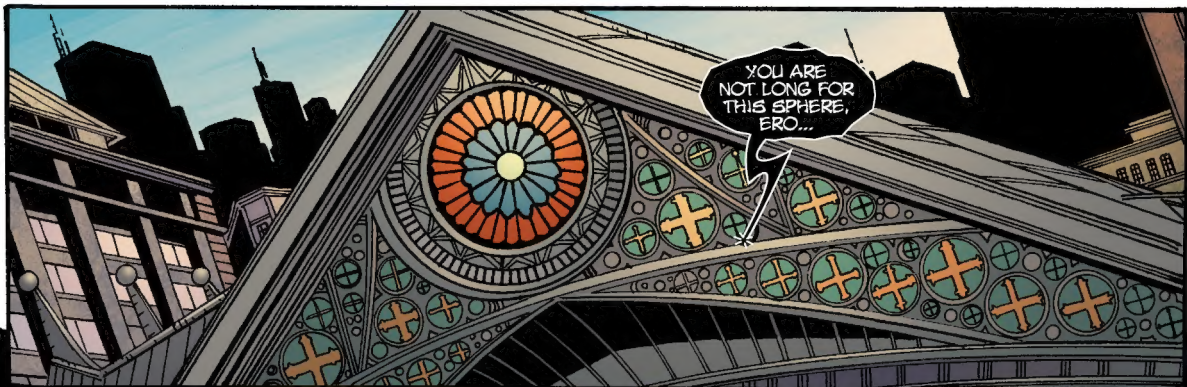
Now in the darkest moment of Peter Parker's life, the malevolent Miss Arrow may be about to drag him further down.

Oh, one more thing ...Kelly Kulick is a real-life former member of the Team USA bowling team and the first woman in history to earn a Professional Bowlers Association tour exemption. She's also a close friend of Flash Thompson's...and may end up being the last person to see him alive.



To find Marvel Comics at a local comic shop, call 1-888-COMICBOOK.

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YOU ARE NOT LONG FOR THIS SPHERE, ERO...

CERTAINLY YOU ARE SENSING THAT BY NOW. YOU MUST REPRODUCE IF YOU ARE TO SURVIVE...

I KNOW THAT. AND I'VE DECIDED ON A HOST.

GOOD. BECAUSE THE LONGER YOU WAIT...

...THE MORE CHANCE THAT OUR NATURAL ENEMIES WILL ATTEMPT TO DESTROY YOU.

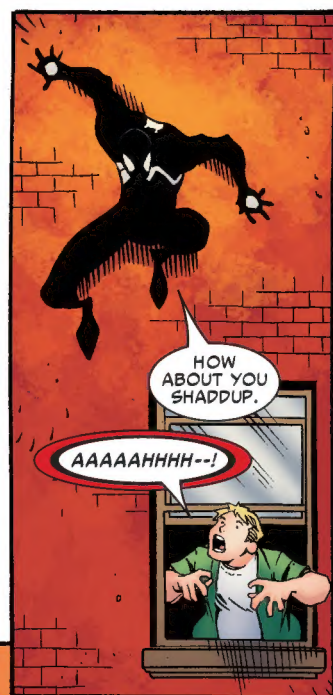
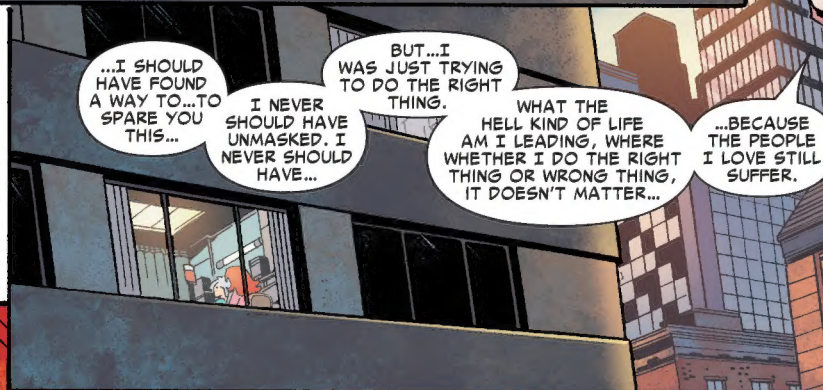
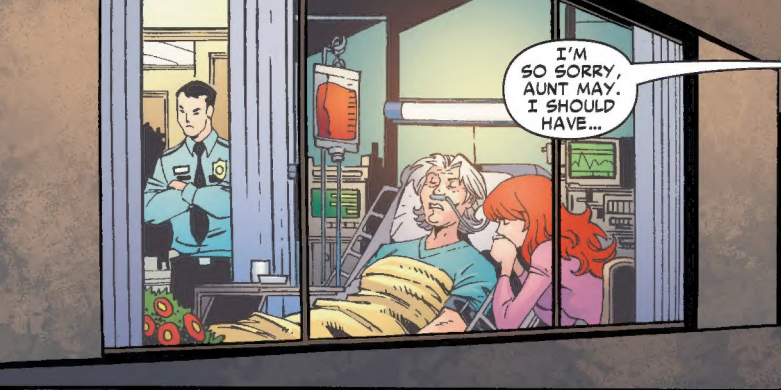


SO DO NOT TAKE OVERMUCH TIME IN MATING...



I WON'T. BY THIS TIME TOMORROW, FLASH THOMPSON SHALL BE MY MATE...AND MY HOST...
...AND AFTER THAT...

...MY SUSTENANCE.





COMING!
HOLD ON!

OH, HELLO, I'M
LOOKING FOR FLASH
THOMPSON...

THIS IS HIS
APARTMENT,
RIGHT?

UH...YEAH.
I'M, UHM...HE'S
LETTING ME
CRASH HERE.

SAY, DIDN'T
I SPOT YOU AT THE
BOOKSTORE SIGNING
THE OTHER DAY?

YOU'VE
GOT QUITE AN EYE
FOR DETAIL.

YEAH, I DO.
AND I NOTICED
THAT YOU VANISHED
WHEN SPIDER-MAN
ARRIVED.

WELL, THAT
VULTURE GUY
SHOWED UP, SO
I LIT OUT.



UH-
HUH.

HEY! I DIDN'T
INVITE YOU IN! THIS
IS, LIKE, ILLEGAL ENTRY.
I COULD CALL THE
COPS.

BE MY GUEST.
I'M ALREADY OUT ON
BAIL. THEY'VE PROBABLY
GOT A REVOLVING DOOR
ON MY CELL.



LOOK,
BETTY, I
DON'T THINK
THAT YOU
SHOULD--

I DIDN'T
INTRODUCE
MYSELF.

YEAH,
YOU DID,
YOU--



+SNIFF+ I USED
TO BE SO MUCH BETTER
AT THE WHOLE SECRETS
THING...

DON'T KID
YOURSELF, PETER.
YOU ALWAYS SUCKED
AT IT. WE WERE ALL JUST
TOO BLIND TO PUT IT
TOGETHER.

GOD,
I'VE MISSED
YOU.

ME TOO
YOU, BETTY. SO...
SO WHAT'RE YOU
DOING HERE?

OHhhh, THAT'S
A STORY IN AND OF
ITSELF. SIT DOWN.
I'LL TELL YOU ALL
ABOUT IT.

RUNNING OUT OF TIME

**PETER
DAVID**
WRITER

**TODD
NAUCK**
PENCILER

**ROBERT
CAMPANELLA**
INKER

**JOHN
KALISZ**
COLORIST

**VE'S CORY
PETIT**
LETTERS

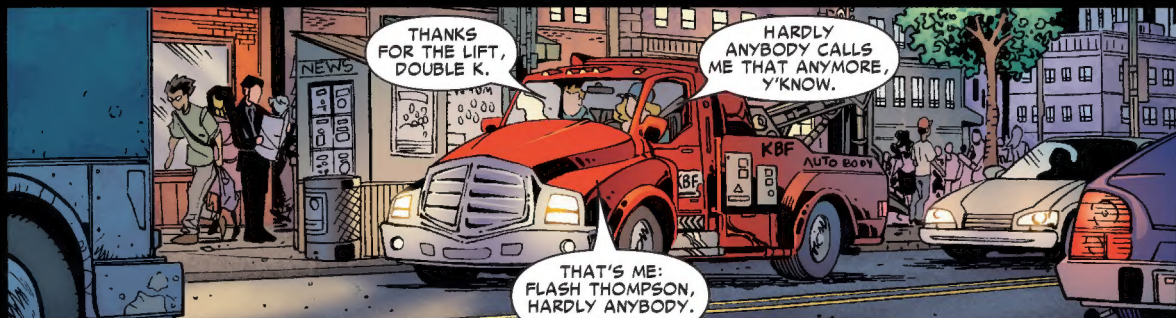
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COKER**
COVER

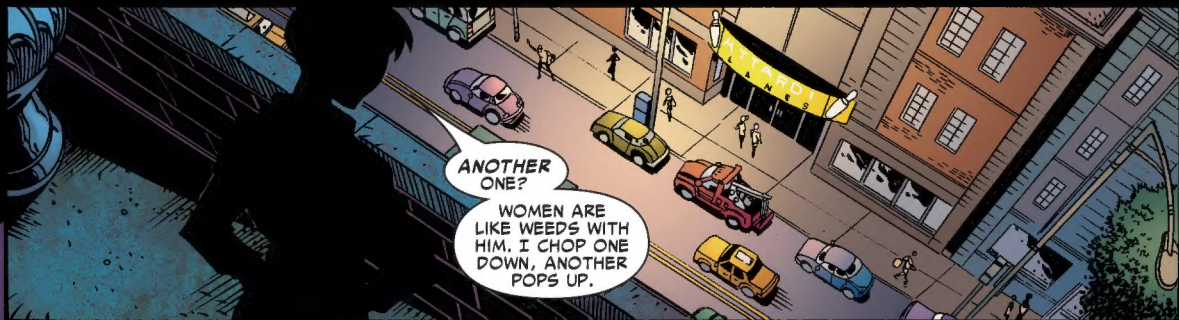
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

**STEPHEN
WACKER**
EDITOR

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QUESADA**
EDITOR IN CHIEF

**DAN
BUCKLEY**
PUBLISHER





ANOTHER ONE?

WOMEN ARE LIKE WEEDS WITH HIM. I CHOP ONE DOWN, ANOTHER POPS UP.



WELL...MAYBE IT'S MY OWN FAULT. I'VE BEEN KEEPING HIM AT ARM'S LENGTH UNTIL I WAS READY TO...

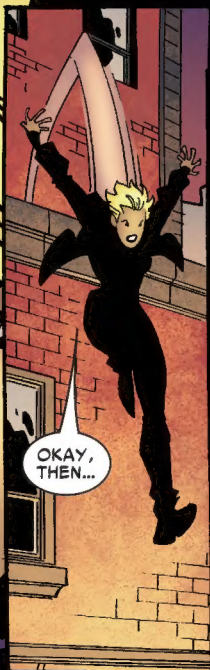


ARRHHHH...



MY OVERSEER...WASN'T KIDDING...

MATTERS ARE MOVING FORWARD... FASTER THAN EXPECTED...



OKAY, THEN...



WHEN NATURE CALLS... ANSWER THE PHONE.



SO THAT'S ALL I KNOW. NOW... I NEED YOU TO BE HONEST WITH ME, PETER.



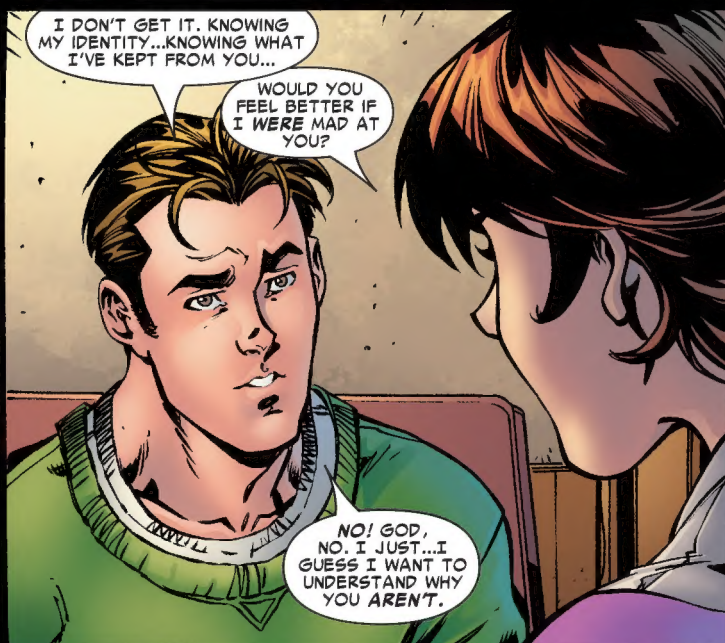
YOU MEAN IN A WAY I NEVER HAVE BEEN BEFORE?

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

ARE YOU SURE?



I'M SURE.



I DON'T GET IT. KNOWING MY IDENTITY...KNOWING WHAT I'VE KEPT FROM YOU...

WOULD YOU FEEL BETTER IF I WERE MAD AT YOU?

NO! GOD, NO. I JUST...I GUESS I WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOU AREN'T.



BECAUSE ALL I CAN THINK OF IS HOW LONELY IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR YOU. CARRYING THAT SECRET ALL THOSE YEARS, AFRAID TO INFLICT THAT BURDEN ON ANYONE ELSE.

AND BECAUSE...



BECAUSE, IN SOME RESPECTS...

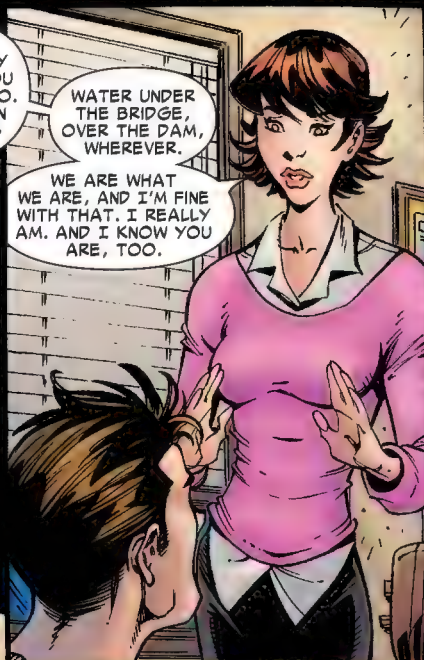
I NEVER STOPPED LOVING YOU.

NOT EVER. NO MATTER WHO ELSE I WAS WITH... NOT EVER.



BETTY,
I...I...

DON'T...SAY
IT. DON'T SAY
ANYTHING. YOU
DON'T HAVE TO.
IT'S ALL BEEN
SAID, YEARS
AGO.



WATER UNDER
THE BRIDGE,
OVER THE DAM,
WHEREVER.

WE ARE WHAT
WE ARE, AND I'M FINE
WITH THAT. I REALLY
AM. AND I KNOW YOU
ARE, TOO.



SO...NURSE
ARROW.

GO AHEAD
AND TELL ME I'M
BARKING UP THE WRONG
TREE. HELL, TELL ME I'M
BARKING MAD. I
CAN TAKE IT.

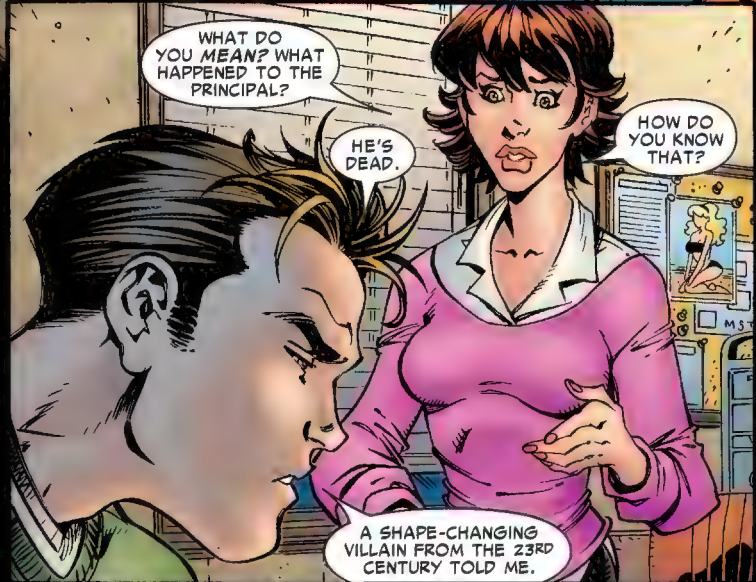


I
WISH I
COULD.

BUT I'M
STARTING
TO WONDER
MYSELF.

THERE'S
SOMETHING GOING
ON AT THE SCHOOL.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT
IT WAS LIMITED TO
THE PRINCIPAL...BUT
THERE'S MORE TO
IT THAN THAT.

AND
IT MAY BE
CONNECTED TO
THOSE SPIDERS
YOU SAW.



WHAT DO
YOU MEAN? WHAT
HAPPENED TO THE
PRINCIPAL?

HE'S
DEAD.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW
THAT?

A SHAPE-CHANGING
VILLAIN FROM THE 23RD
CENTURY TOLD ME.



AND TO THINK I WAS
WORRIED YOU'D BELIEVE
I WAS CRAZY.

BUT WHAT'S
THAT HAVE TO DO WITH
THE SPIDERS?



DON'T ASK ME HOW I KNOW...

...BUT I'VE GOT THE SICKENING SUSPICION THEY'RE SOMEWHERE IN THE SCHOOL...

...AND THAT THEY ATE HIS BODY.



AND...AND YOU THINK THIS IS CONNECTED TO ARROW?

SOMETHING SURE IS. EARLIER TODAY, I WAS IN FLASH'S OFFICE.

HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT THIS HIDEOUS DATE HE'D HAD WITH SOME CRAZY LADY...



OH. WHICH... I GUESS WAS YOU, HUH...

AHEM. SORRY. ANYWAY...



"HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO BE DRIVING 'WHAT WAS LEFT' OF HIS CAR TO A FRIEND'S DAD'S AUTO BODY SHOP..."

"...AND SHE'D GIVE HIM A LIFT BACK TO THE CITY."

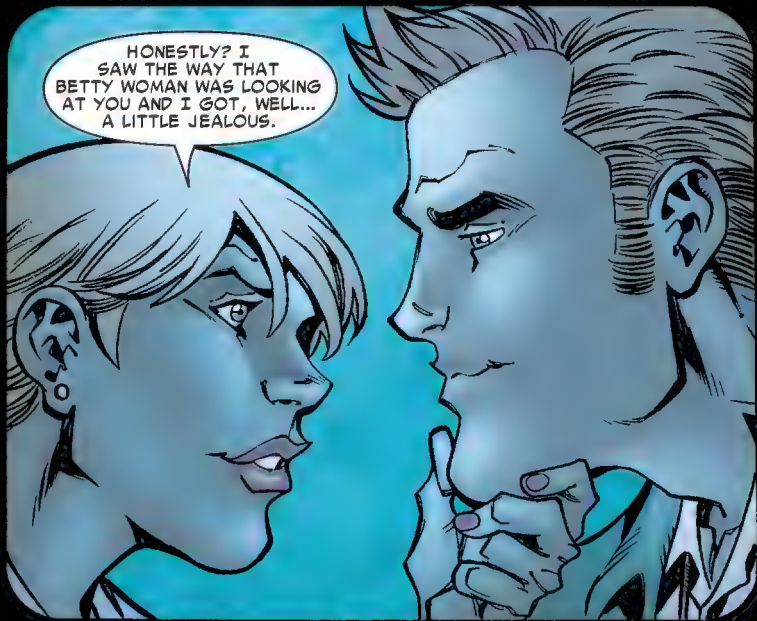
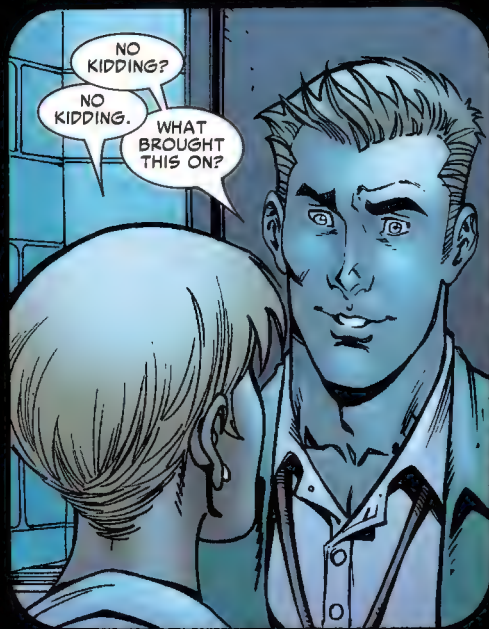
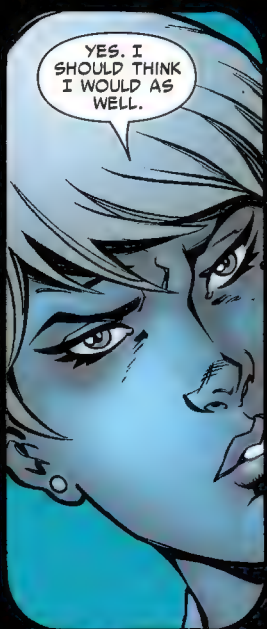
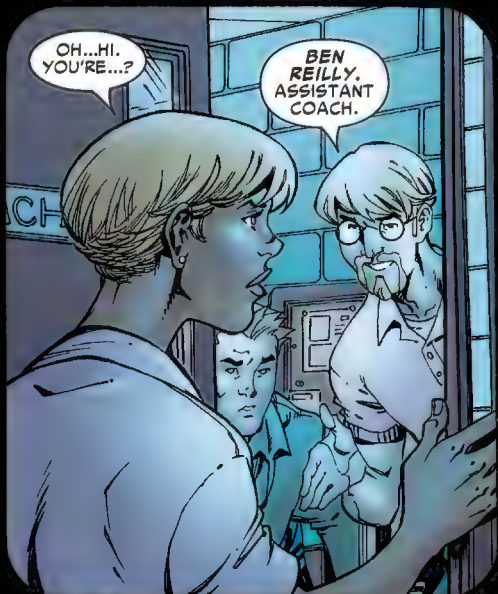
"AND SUDDENLY..."

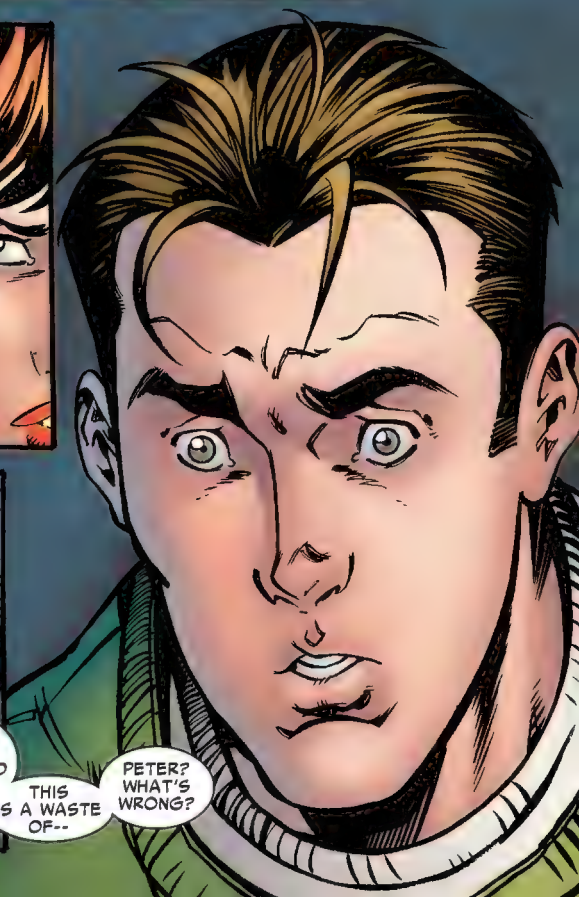
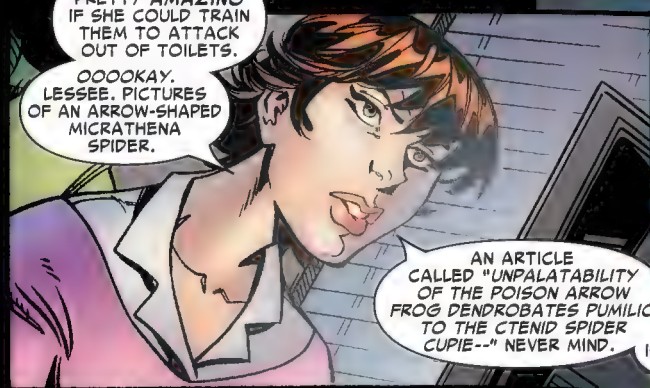


FLASH...

UH-OH.

RLIK







THEY WERE THERE...IN STARK TOWERS...THEY...THEY ATE THE SKIN OF MY OLD BODY...

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

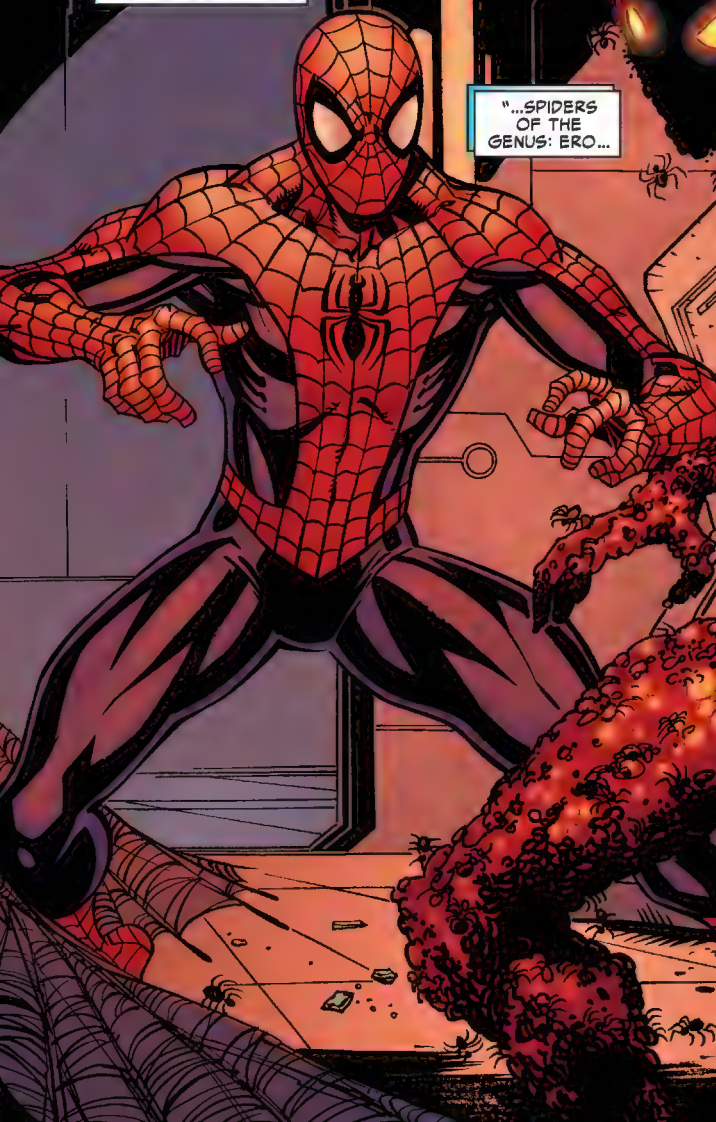
AND I REALIZED WHAT THEY WERE...

"PIRATE SPIDERS...
MIMETIDAE FAMILY...
GENUS: ERO..."

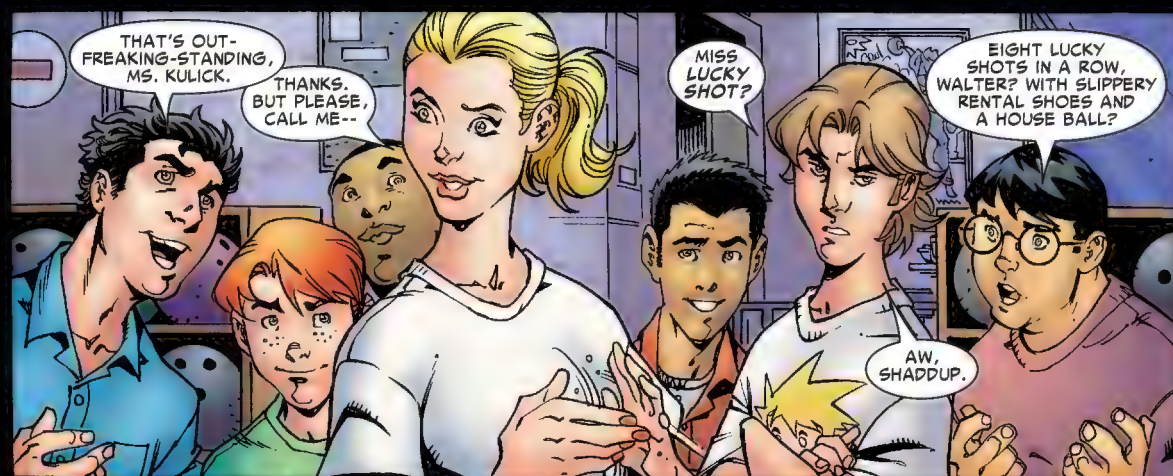
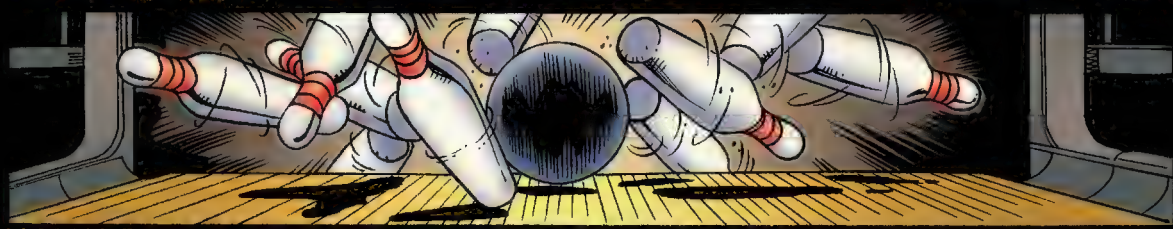
"ALSO CALLED CANNIBAL SPIDERS, SINCE THEY FEED ON OTHER SPIDERS..."

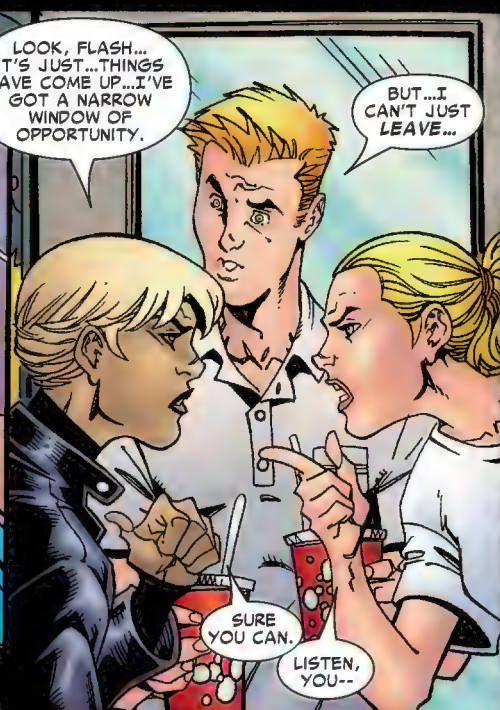
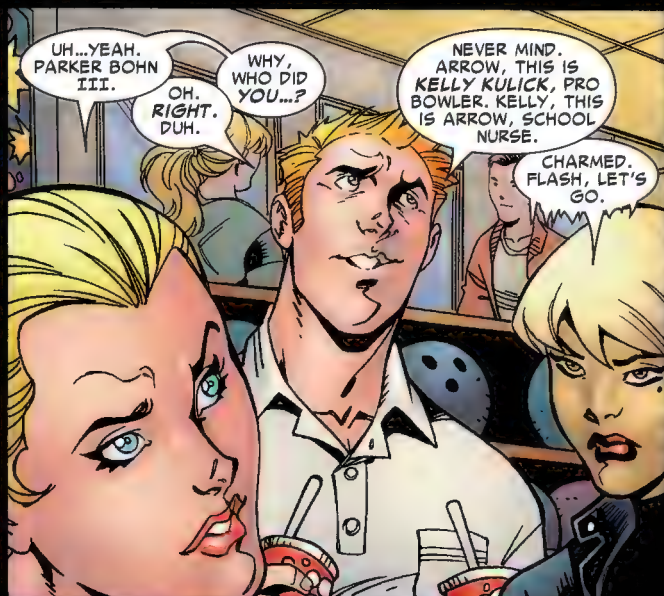
"AND THERE WAS THIS CREATURE...THIS THING MADE ENTIRELY OF SPIDERS..."

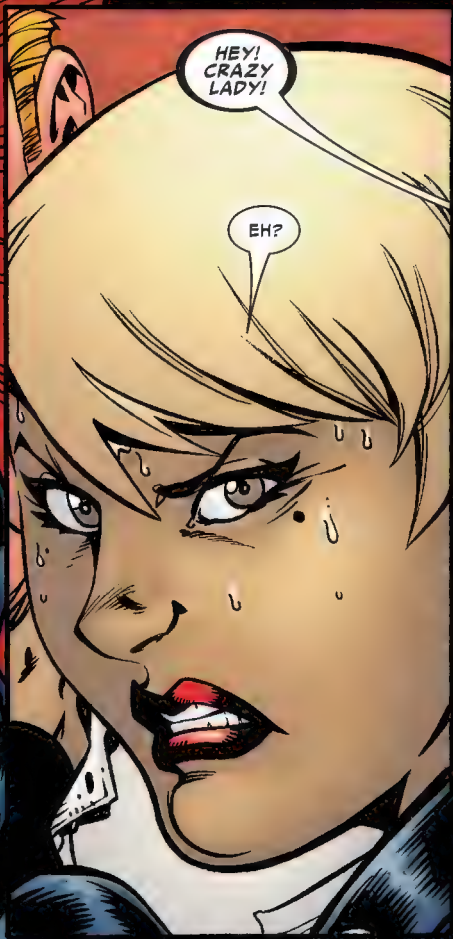
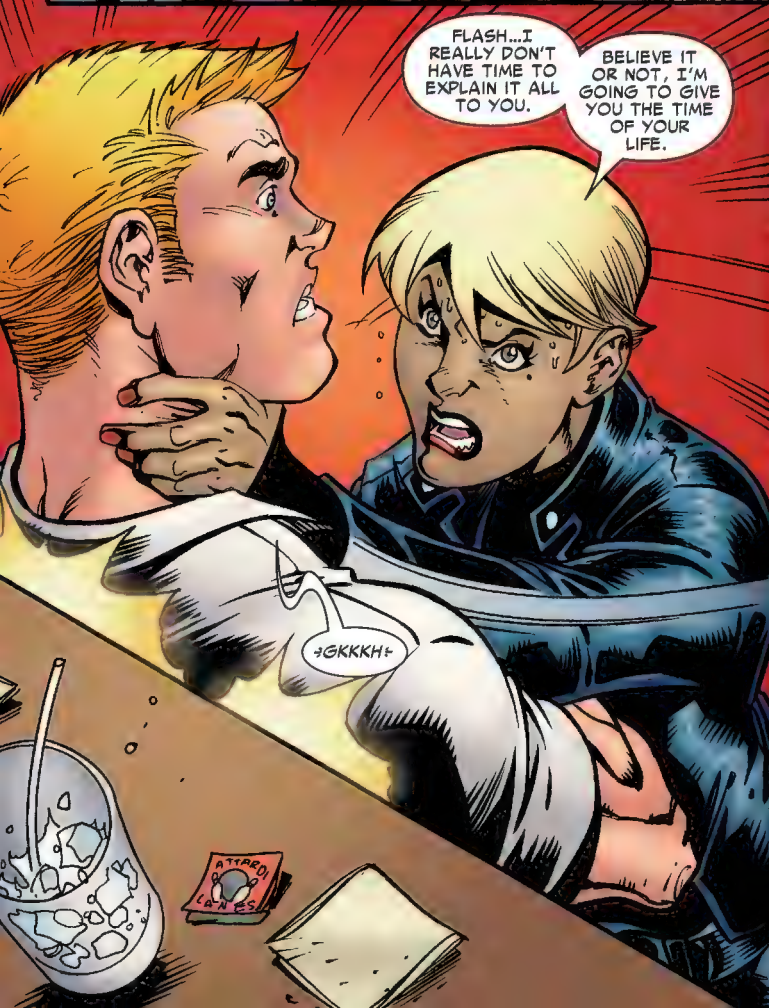
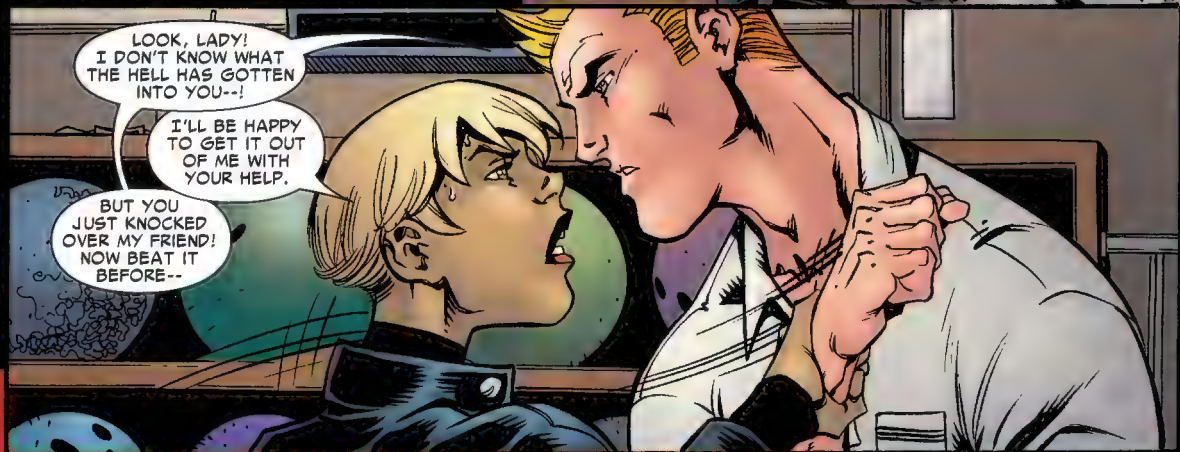
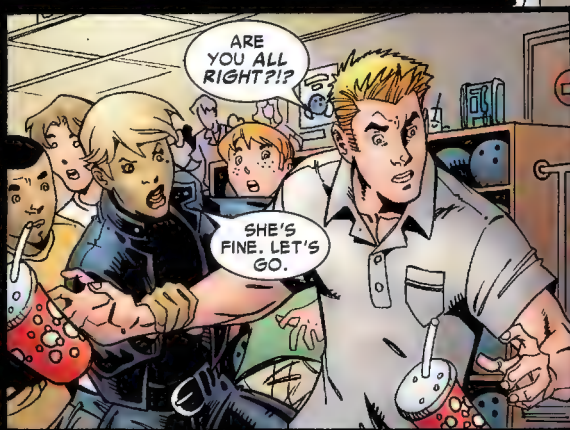
"...SPIDERS OF THE GENUS: ERO..."

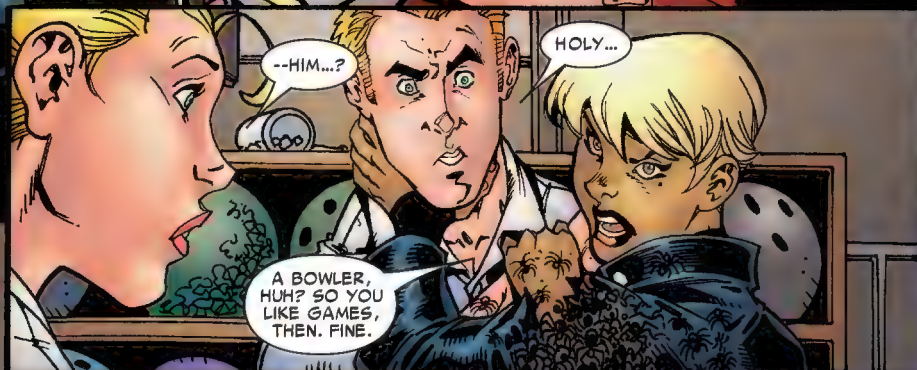
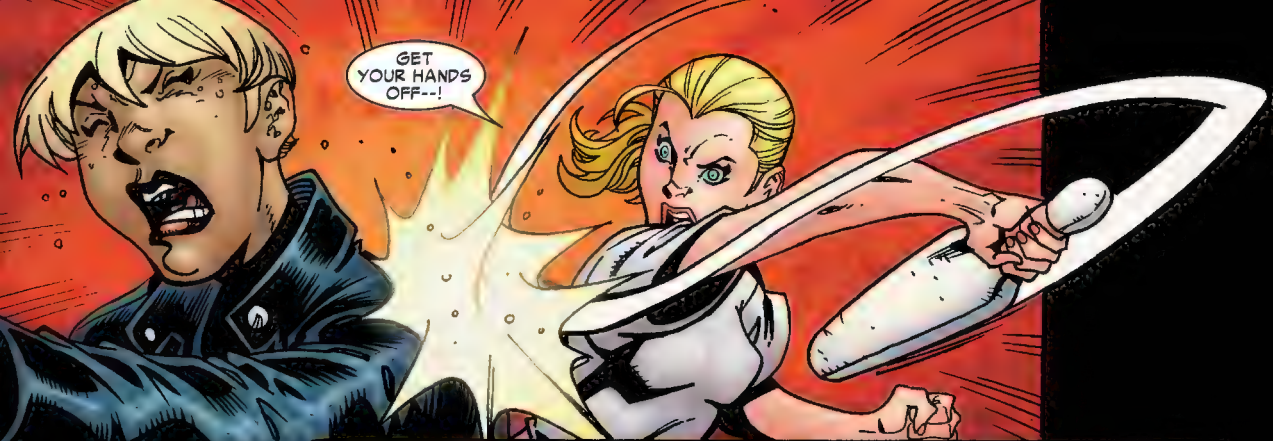


"ERO...WHICH SOUNDS A HELL OF A LOT LIKE..."









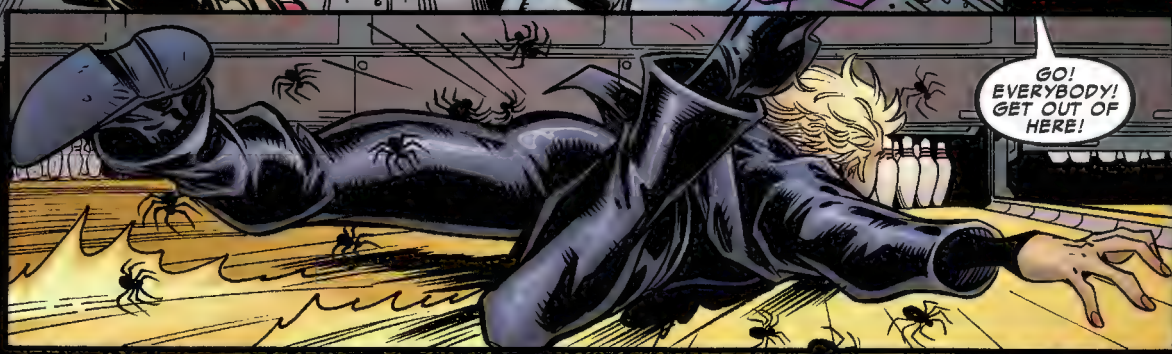


ERO!!!!

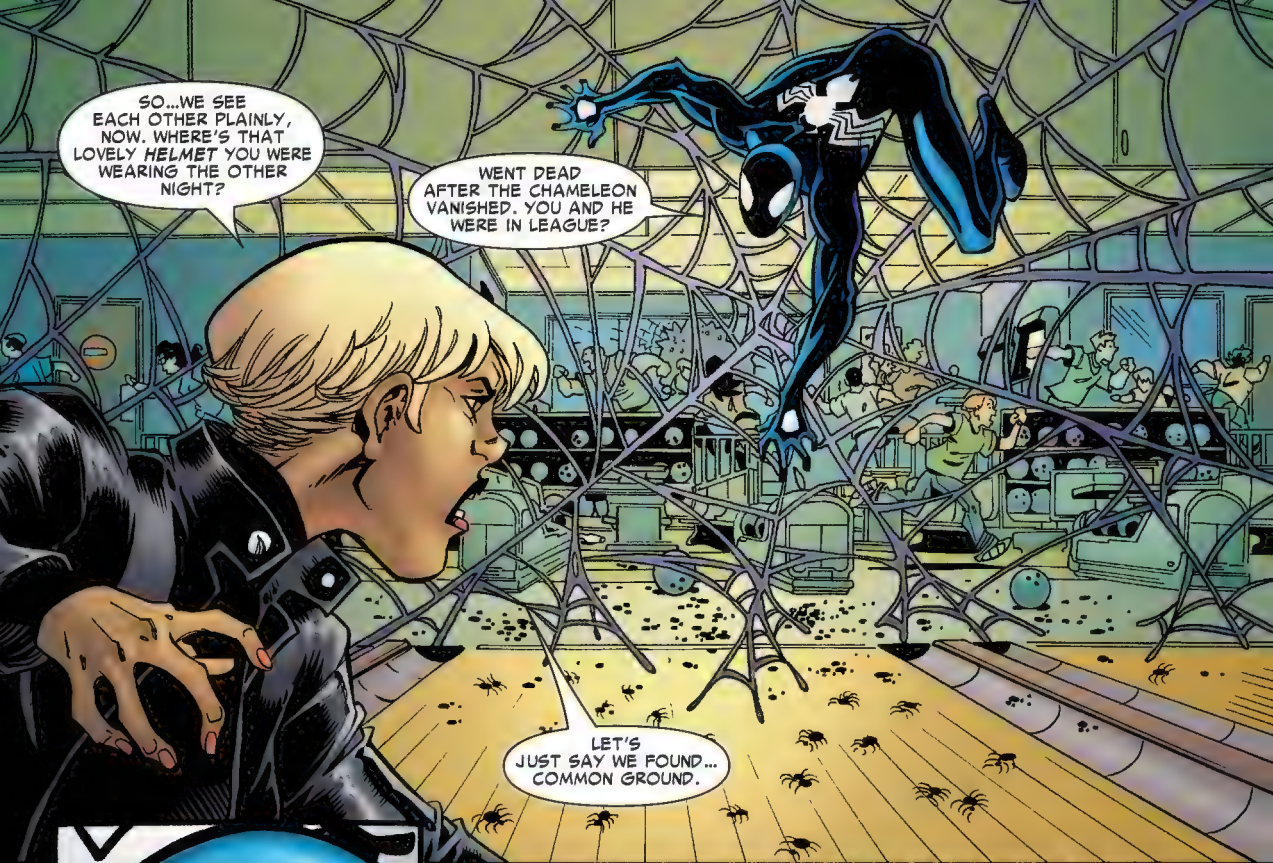


OOOOOF!!!

TOOM



GO!
EVERYBODY!
GET OUT OF
HERE!



SO...WE SEE EACH OTHER PLAINLY, NOW. WHERE'S THAT LOVELY HELMET YOU WERE WEARING THE OTHER NIGHT?

WENT DEAD AFTER THE CHAMELEON VANISHED. YOU AND HE WERE IN LEAGUE?

LET'S JUST SAY WE FOUND... COMMON GROUND.



LET'S JUST SAY YOU GET TO GO BACK TO WHATEVER HELL SPIT YOU OUT.

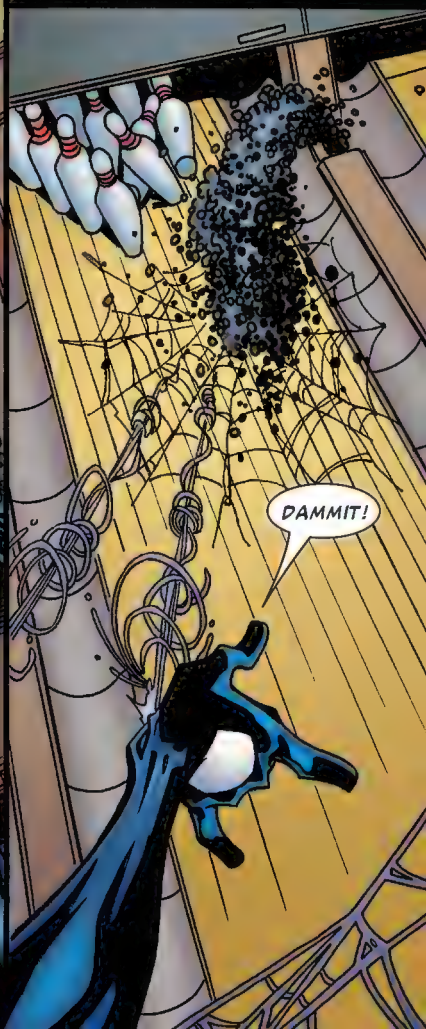


MY, HOW YOU TALK. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

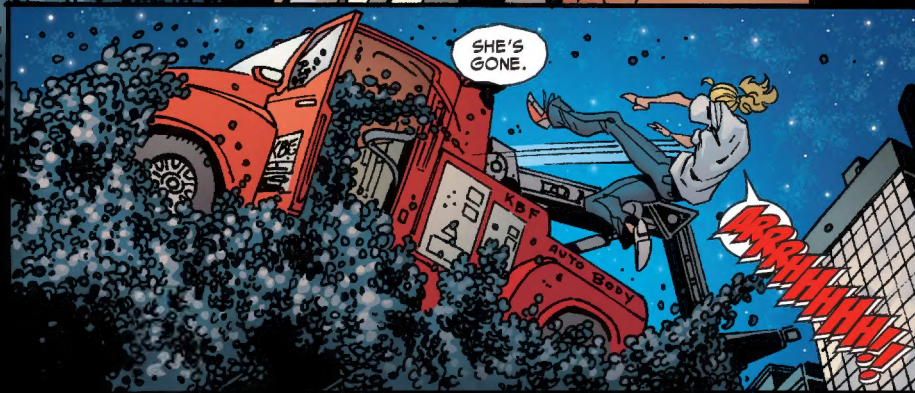
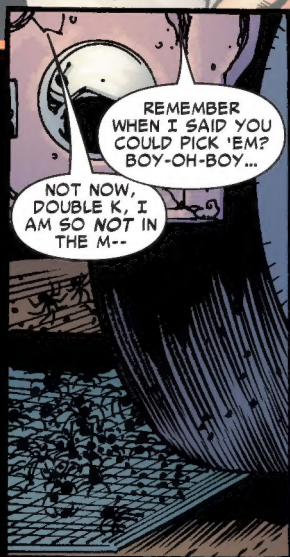
I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF YOU HADN'T VIOLATED THE NATURAL ORDER. IF YOU HADN'T CHEATED DEATH.

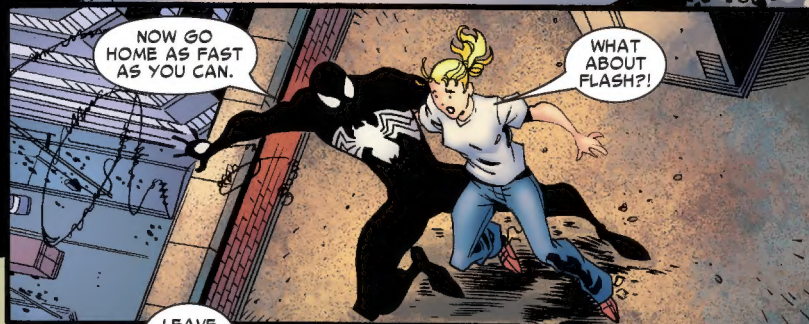
I AM YOUR NEMESIS... YOUR OPPOSITE NUMBER...YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER.

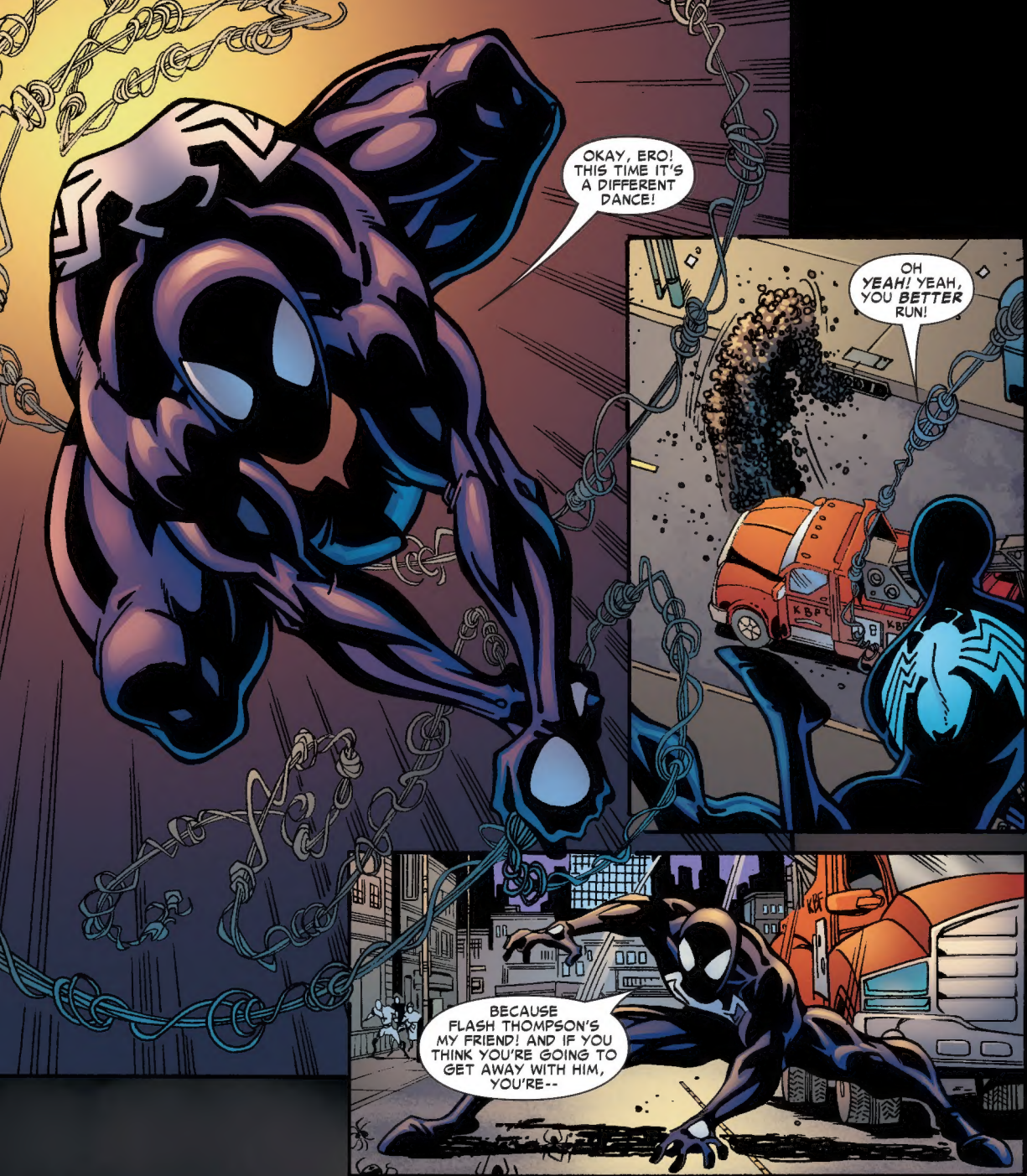
AND YOU DON'T GET RID OF ME THAT EASILY.



DAMMIT!







TO BE CONTINUED!

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAIL

All right, Spidey-troops, we're back once again with another installment of FNSMail and a LOT of reaction to the beginning of our part of the BACK IN BLACK Saga. So, let's stop yapping and get to your letters.

Dear Steve and Aubrey,

FNSM #17 was my first issue of your fine book. Sorry I'm late! Sandman is my favorite Spidey villain. Seems like nothing can stop 'im. However, it was indeed Spidey being "Back in Black" that lured me in. I think the way the black costume appeared on the title page is the finest I have ever seen it. Good to see that Spidey hasn't lost his sense of humor, either. Keep it up, folks, keep it up.

Lloyd A. Grant
Saginaw, Michigan

Thanks, Lloyd. We forgive you for not jumping on until now. And don't worry, we were saving the best stuff until you came aboard. It's the Year of the Spider and I think you're going to like it here.

Dear FNSM Crew,

I love the book. I started with "Amazing" and then stopped because I wasn't digging it (sorry, guys). Then I read "Ultimate" and stopped because I was strapped for cash. But I've been with FNSM since #1 and it's still keeping strong.

To me, it has it all. Peter David (one of my fave writers), funny and cool stories, and you even brought back and made really cool my favorite Spidey villain... Mysterio! Plus #15 Colbert cameo, funny.

One question though, that I always thought very puzzling about the Spidey universe, how come Spidey doesn't have any consistently strong, cool, female adversaries? Black Cat and Silver Sable became good guys, Stunner and Doc Ock #2 lost their mojo. I mean, come on, if you can make Vulture cool and threatening, I'm sure this could be cake. If I'm wrong, please prove me wrong. Either way, love the book, the art, the hero, and the company.

Willie

Willie, you make a good point about female villains and we're looking into adding more in to Spidey's Universe

over the next year or so (Hey, I just thought of another ...Madame Web!).

Also, keep a look out for the FREE COMIC BOOK DAY issue of Spider-Man by Dan Slott and Phil Jimenez which features a new female character that may haunt Spidey in the months to come.

Dear FNSM,

I have been very pleased with the last few story arcs. I have a question, though. I think I know the roles of the writer, penciler, and the colorist, but what makes the inker different from the penciler?

Another question--is there a chance of seeing the Iron Spidey costume in the future? And thanks for bringing back the Black costume.

Kenyatta Poe
via marvel.com

Kenyatta, I went right to the source on this one, current FNSM inker Robert Campanella, who'll help explain what he does. Take it away, Robert!

The difference between the inker and the penciler is simply this: The penciler actually draws the book. He's the guy who gets the plot from the writer and breaks down the page into panels. He's the guy who works out the composition of each panel. He's the guy who then draws what he's worked out into each and every panel of each and every page. And he does all this work in pencil (which is where we get the term "penciler" from).

The inker comes in next. What this guy does is turn all this penciled work into inked work. With a brush and/or a pen he puts ink right on top of the penciler's drawings.

Sometimes the drawings are very complete and everything is really nailed down precisely. These would be called "tight" pencils. Other times the drawings are not so complete. They may need to be taken just that little extra step to be ready for publication. These might be called "loose" pencils.

In each case it's the inker's job to interpret the marks made with a pencil and turn them into marks made with ink.

These black-and-white illustrations are then scanned into a computer and are colored (but you can turn to a colorist to find out what they do).

There you have it. All done.

And that's one to grow on...Thanks, Robert! And now back to the mail:

Friendly Fellows,
RE: FNSM 18.

Geez. Spiders crawling out of the toilet while I am using it has always been one of my big fears, but I thought that I could just keep that to myself. After all, it was unlikely to actually happen...and who else would think of it and show it somewhere that I am likely to see it?

I will never go to the toilet again. Thanks.

Adrian J. Watts
Melbourne, Australia

Dear rest of Australia,
Sorry.

Steve Wacker
New York City

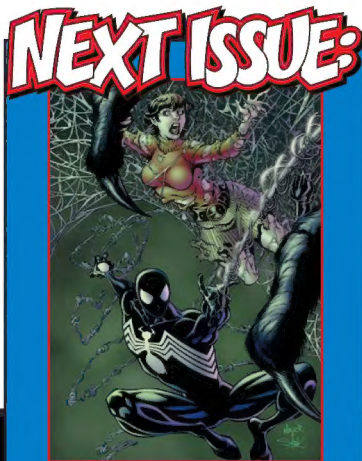
That's all the time we have, Spidey Gang. You've got a busy month ahead with a lot to do:

1) Make sure you run out and catch SPIDER-MAN 3 at your local multiplex. It's one of those small independent films that could really use your help.

2) Check out FREE COMIC BOOK DAY with a brand-new (and very important) Spidey story.

3) Check out both AMAZING and SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN this month for more exciting chapters of Back In Black.

Viva Templar!
Simperin' Steve Wacker



MISS ARROW
STRIKES!

AUBREY SITTERSON
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